

Book reviews

Solution Focused Group Coaching

Carin Mussmann and Cornelia Decher

Carin Mussman, 2013, 80 pages, Interactive ebook – on CD or for iPad (£8.49 in iTunes)

Review by Julia Kalenberg

As I had never read a book on an iPad before, I was doubtful and felt tempted at the same time to write this book review. I had two questions: Can I use an iPad to read a book? And am I able to host a SF Group Coaching session? I took the chance and dived into the adventure.

And after having read, enjoyed and played with the book I dare to say: Yes, I can. For everybody who has never read an ebook before: it's light and joyful and reading becomes a playful adventure due to video clips and interactive pictures. And you can also – like in a normal book – highlight words and sentences with a marker, stick post-it notes into it and so on.

Whilst reading the book there was a song going round in my head: Ralph McTell's "Let me take you by the hand and lead you through the streets of London". And that's what it felt like for me as a reader – I was taken by the hand by the two authors, who explained the purpose, benefits and process of group coaching. And it raised my motivation and confidence to carry it out in practice. For readers who are not familiar with SF coaching, the authors offer a short and valuable introduction into SF as well.

The whole book is an invitation to work with the SF group coaching approach and give it a go. The authors provide just the necessary background and then explain in depth how to do things.

Their aim is to develop a well-structured and practical

approach to demonstrate the use of SF techniques in a group coaching setting. And that's what they have achieved. The interactive e-book is indeed clearly structured and does indeed serve as a practical guide of how to organise and host a SF group coaching session. It can be applied in a variety of contexts: management or leadership training and development, organisation development as well as training of coaches and supervisors.

The SF group coaching concept has evolved over time with a lot of practical experience of the authors and feedback from participants. The authors learned during the evolution of the concept to emphasise the importance of the first coaching session. They give concrete guidelines concerning group size, number of meetings and duration. Everything is very clear and can be realised easily with the necessary preparation. With this clear instruction people will feel safe and encouraged to establish their own SF group coaching sessions.

The structure of the book met my information needs exactly. The book consists of 5 chapters.

Chapter one identifies who might find the SF Group coaching interesting (coaches, managers, supervisors). Its aim and its benefits are also discussed, and you can contribute and learn from it in any role you assume: as a facilitator, as a coachee and as a participant. The aim of SF Group Coaching is to help participants develop new skills, exchange knowledge and experiences and find solutions to their current coaching and/or management challenges. It's impressive how everybody involved in the process can contribute and learn at the same time in the different roles.

Chapter two is like a good cookbook: with the clear description of what to do, how to do it and why, the aim of the authors – that every participant is able to assume every role (even the role of the facilitator) – becomes feasible. This chapter is the heart of the book in my opinion: the five steps of the concept (introduction, working method selection, solution development, implementation initiation, feedback and close) are explained thoroughly. One notices the wide practice and

deep practical experience of the authors. They go into depth and provide concrete examples of useful questions. This may encourage even less experienced coaches and managers to take a chance with the approach.

In chapter three the authors explain in a well-structured, short and practical way the various methods that they suggest using in the different phases of the group coaching process. They also mention possible difficulties which might arise and how to overcome them. With the insertion of a short video clip the authors demonstrate how e.g. the “Future perfect interview” functions, and thereby make the reader feel comfortable, safe and secure. With the concrete explanation of the methods it will be also possible for managers and people foreign to training and coaching to follow the concept after a thorough examination and maybe an instruction. The authors constantly stress the worth of visualisation of the process and results and give valuable examples for that in the form of reproductions of flipcharts which are helpful.

Chapter four consists of five concrete case examples. In each of these the authors give a narrative description of the whole case and go into depth concerning one different step of the group coaching process in each case. For people who are already familiar with facilitation, SF and the methods, it’s very interesting to read and learn from specific examples.

Chapter five, “Terminology”, offers a short definition of related concepts such as supervision and group supervision, peer coaching. And the Chapter 6 “Road Map” is a schedule for practical implementation of the concept.

The book is a very practical handbook which gives you the necessary background and detailed information about the how and why. And above all it leaves you feeling that “you are the expert” and “you can do it”. Thank you to the authors for encouraging me.

The book is available as an interactive CD ebook version (for Computers, Laptops, Tablets, Readers, etc) directly from Carin Mussmann or Cornelia Decher via cornelia@decherlearning.com The interactive iPad ibook version can be purchased from the iBookStore (which is an 'App' on the iPad) or from itunes: <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/book/solution-focused-group-coaching/id642972130?mt=11>, – free sample pages can be viewed here too.